

## WIPP Quick Facts (As of 7-30-12)

**10,697**

Shipments received since opening  
(10,128 CH and 569 RH)

**82,869**

Cubic meters of waste disposed  
(82,598 CH and 286 RH)

**161,142**

Containers disposed in the  
underground  
(160,576 CH and 566 RH)

## EPA conducts annual inspection at WIPP

The Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Radiation and Indoor Air completed its annual inspection of the WIPP facility on July 17-19.

The inspection included a review of the monitoring program, waste emplacement and compliance with 40 CFR 191, Subpart A., which relates to the accurate measurement and calculation of any actual or potential radiation dose to the public.

The inspection ended with no findings or concerns.

## Secretary Chu recognizes WIPP environmental efforts



Secretary of Energy Steven Chu recently presented WIPP contractor Judy McLemore with a Secretarial Appreciation Award in recognition of recent environmental efforts at WIPP.

The award called out WIPP's efforts to improve sustainability, to lower travel costs and to reduce the fleet vehicle size. Green House Gas emissions associated with business travel were reduced by 63 percent with a reduced cost of \$20,000 in FY11. For FY12, a 50 percent reduction is projected with a cost reduction of \$140,000.

Each department at WIPP contributed to the reduction with most departments reducing the number of trips taken by over 60 percent compared to the prior year. Personnel increased use of technology options and shared rides when traveling by vehicle. The URS Washington TRU Solutions (WTS) Central Characterization Project was a significant contributor to the reduction with a 75 percent reduction in business trips.

Additionally, WIPP's fleet vehicle size (government vehicles, not related to waste transportation), has decreased by 20 percent in the last two years with a 60 percent reduction in travel costs.

McLemore, who works for URS Regulatory and Environmental Services, was quick to point out that many people played a role.



"Teamwork was the key," she said, referring to the partnership with Randy Elmore of the DOE's Carlsbad Field Office and Ellen Harkness of WTS (shown with McLemore above) that led to WIPP's success.



### WIPP Red Mine Rescue Team overall winner in Kentucky contest

WIPP's Red Mine Rescue Team competed in the Southeast Central Kentucky Mine Rescue Contest last month and walked away with top honors.

The team was the Overall winner of the contest, having performed well in several categories. The Red Team placed second in the Field Contest, only two discounts behind the winner. Curtis Sanders, III and Mathew Ridgway placed fourth in the Team Technician Contest. And Fabian Carrasco, Kirk Nance and Doug Pitzer placed first in the First Aid Contest. Rounding out the rest of the team was Mark Long, Jr. and Nico Dominguez. The trainer is Stik West.

WIPP has two mine rescue teams that compete in contests designed to improve skills and promote the highest levels of mine safety. WIPP also has agreements for mutual aid with local potash mines, who have their own mine rescue teams.



## DOE Announces Issuance of Draft Supplemental Environmental Study on Plutonium Disposition

On July 27, the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) National Nuclear Security Administration released the *Draft Surplus Plutonium Disposition Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (Draft SPD Supplemental EIS)* for public review and comment. The Draft Supplemental EIS analyzes the potential environmental impacts of alternatives for the disposition of 7.1 metric tons (MT) of additional weapons-usable plutonium from pits that were declared surplus to national defense needs in 2007 but were not included in DOE's prior decisions as well as 6 MT of surplus, weapons-usable non-pit plutonium.

The *SPD Supplemental EIS* analyzes four alternative disposition pathways: disposition of plutonium using the can-in-canister vitrification approach, involving small cans of material, which would be placed in a rack inside a Defense Waste Processing Facility canister and surrounded with vitrified high-level radioactive waste at the Savannah River Site (SRS); disposition of non-pit plutonium via H-Canyon and DWPF at SRS; disposal of non-pit plutonium at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) in New Mexico; and fabrication of pit and some non-pit plutonium into mixed oxide (MOX) fuel for use in domestic commercial nuclear power reactors. The *SPD Supplemental EIS* also includes options for providing a pit disassembly and conversion capability including a stand-alone facility at SRS or installing capability in existing facilities at one or more of the following locations: the Plutonium Facility (PF-4) at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), H Canyon/HB-Line at SRS, K-Area at SRS and the Mixed Oxide Fuel Fabrication Facility at SRS.

The MOX Fuel Alternative is DOE's preferred alternative for surplus plutonium disposition. DOE's preferred option for pit disassembly and the conversion of surplus plutonium metal to supply feed for the MFFF, is to use some combination of facilities at PF-4 at LANL, K-Area at SRS, H-Canyon/HB-Line at SRS and MFFF at SRS, rather than to construct a new stand-alone facility. This would likely require the installation of additional equipment and other modifications to some of these facilities. DOE's preferred alternative for disposition of surplus plutonium that is not suitable for MOX fuel fabrication is disposal at WIPP in New Mexico.

The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) is a cooperating agency for the *SPD Supplemental EIS*. DOE and TVA have entered into an interagency agreement to evaluate the use of mixed oxide fuel in reactors at TVA's Browns Ferry and Sequoyah Nuclear Plants. TVA does not have a preferred alternative at this time regarding whether to pursue irradiation of MOX fuel in TVA reactors and which reactors might be used for this purpose.

DOE will host local public hearings to solicit comment on the *Draft SPD Supplemental EIS*:

- **August 21, 2012** – Holiday Inn Express, Los Alamos, NM, from 5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
- **August 23, 2012** – Courtyard by Marriott Santa Fe, Santa Fe, NM, from 5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
- **August 28, 2012** – Pecos River Village Conference Center, Carlsbad, NM, from 5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
- **September 4, 2012** – North Augusta Municipal Center, North Augusta, SC, from 5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
- **September 11, 2012** – Chattanooga Convention Center, Chattanooga, TN, from 5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.



- **September 13, 2012** – Calhoun Community College – Decatur Campus, Decatur, AL, from 5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

As a convenience to persons who may not be able to attend a public hearing, the hearing in North Augusta, South Carolina on September 4, will be available beginning at 6:30 p.m. (Eastern Time) via a live video webcast at [http://msddev.srs.gov/general/2012\\_public\\_hearing.htm](http://msddev.srs.gov/general/2012_public_hearing.htm).

A 60-day public comment period begins today and will extend through September 25, 2012.



Public comments on the *Draft SPD Supplemental EIS* should be sent to:  
Ms. Sachiko McAlhany,  
Document Manager,  
SPD Supplement EIS  
P.O. Box 2324  
Germantown, MD 20874-2324

Comments on the *Draft SPD Supplemental EIS* can be also sent via email to [spdsupplementaleis@saic.com](mailto:spdsupplementaleis@saic.com); by toll-free fax to (887) 865-0277. DOE will give equal weight to written, email, fax, and oral comments.

A link to the *Draft SPD Supplemental EIS* and additional related information can be found at: <http://nnsa.energy.gov/nepa/spdsupplementaleis>.

### TRUPACT-III fleet grows with new unit

WIPP's fleet of TRUPACT-IIIs has grown. On July 26, the third of six units was delivered by the manufacturer to the Savannah River Site (SRS). The Nuclear Regulatory Commission-certified shipping container is expected to be put into service quickly.

Since TRUPACT-III shipments began in August 2011, WIPP has received 30 shipments in TRUPACT-IIIs from SRS, the only site to use the packaging, so far.

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## Mustin visits Carlsbad Field Office, tours WIPP



DOE Principal Assistant Secretary Tracy Mustin paid a visit to southeast New Mexico on July 9. Not only did she have the opportunity to tour WIPP's surface and underground facilities, but she also took time to meet with the Carlsbad Field Office staff. Above, Mustin is shown with CBFO Manager Joe Franco.

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## WIPP aids assessment, re-opening of Carlsbad Caverns

The Carlsbad Caverns are typically open 364 days of the year, so the recent closure was a surprise to those who wanted to see the natural beauty of the caves.

On Monday, July 23, Carlsbad Caverns National Park closed due to odors in the Visitors Center. The odors were from surface preparation and painting activities in the elevator shafts. A number of employees had complaints regarding the odors and seven employees were seen at the Carlsbad Medical Center's emergency room.

On Tuesday afternoon, Park Superintendent John Benjamin called WTS Safety Programs to see if we had an expert and equipment that could be on stand-by. By Wednesday morning the request came for independent verification of fume levels to determine whether the park was safe to open.

WTS Industrial Hygienist John Doherty (pictured at left with air quality instrumentation) loaded up equipment and joined Federal and State industrial hygienists, as well as vendor personnel doing testing. The team conducted a coordinated room-by-room air quality survey, followed by a conference call with the Department of Interior's industrial hygienist. Their findings formed the basis for the National Park Service to re-open to the public, which was done by noon on Wednesday.

"I want to send a big thank you to our community partners at WIPP," said Benjamin at a recent community meeting. "Bertha Cassingham and John Doherty were a tremendous help. We couldn't have re-opened the park as quickly had they not jumped in to help."

In addition to assisting with the scientific data needed to re-open the park, Doherty helped with the human element, as well. The team of industrial hygienists met with park employees to explain what the science meant and to answer questions. First and foremost, of course, was to make sure they knew that their work environment was safe.

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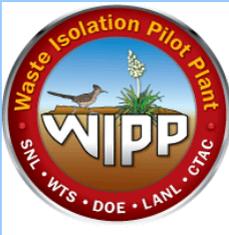
## WIPP parking entrance honors late CBFO employee



As employees arrive at WIPP each day, they are now greeted by a new sign, designating the turn-in as Bernardino Blvd. The designation honors Bernardino R. Rodriguez, known as Bernie, a former co-worker who passed away in February after battling cancer.

Family members, friends and former colleagues gathered at the WIPP site for the official unveiling of the signage on July 3.

Rodriguez' career included 25 years as a federal employee. He joined the DOE Carlsbad Field Office in October 2008 as a facility engineering manager, but previously worked for the National Park Service and the Bureau of Reclamation. In addition, he was a U.S. Navy veteran.



**The U.S. Department of Energy  
Waste Isolation Pilot Plant**

To be added to the TRU TeamWorks update notification list or to submit comments or suggestions, please contact us at [TRUTeamWorks@wipp.ws](mailto:TRUTeamWorks@wipp.ws).

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